



NWSChat Setup Instructions National Weather Service – Des Moines, IA

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I. Introduction

These instructions will detail how to participate in the Des Moines National Weather Service NWSChat project (<https://nwschat.weather.gov>) for emergency managers, 911 dispatch offices and other authorized partners. The only system requirement is a connection to the internet. Windows operating system instructions are included in this document. For instructions on other operating systems such as Mac OS X please visit (<https://nwschat.weather.gov/emAdium.php>)

II. Account Creation

To access the system, each user will first need to create their own personal account using an “affiliation-firstname.lastname” naming convention. Group or generic office accounts are *not* allowed. To create your user account visit (<https://nwschat.weather.gov/create.php>).

1. You *must* read the terms of use and agree to them before proceeding.
2. Request your NWSChat username. Select one of the affiliations in the Option 1 pulldown menu based on your agency. Some of the most common are Emergency Management, Fire, Law/Dispatch, and Ham Radio. If your agency is not listed, please email the admin team using the link provided. The account name must be all lower case.
3. The account alias is the ‘handle’ that will be visible to other users and should be descriptive of your organization, role, position and/or name (polk-ia-emcoordinator, idot-ops support center, butler-ia-dispatch, etc).
4. Your e-mail address for news or announcements
5. Phone number
6. Affiliation – EM, IA HLSEM, Sheriff, COE, USGS, IA DOT, etc
7. Select your password which must be at least 12 characters, contain at least one lower case letter, one upper case letter and one digit or special character. Password cannot be one of the last 24 passwords used and must contain 6 unique (non-repeating) characters. Passwords must be changed every 180 days and can be reset by visiting this link

(<https://nwschat.weather.gov/pwupdate.php>). You do not need to know your previous password to complete this task.

8. Select your local NWS office affiliation. In our case it would be Des Moines (DMX). ^{2nd} column under Central Region.
9. The system will reply with an e-mail containing a link to brief training material which you must read and complete before proceeding.

III. Software Installation

Software utilized for Windows is called Pidgin, a secure open source internet chat application, and can be downloaded for free at <http://pidgin.im>. Download the .exe file and install answering the prompts as appropriate. Although older versions may be similar, this documentation assumes you are running at least version 2.5.2.

IV. Software Configuration

Start Pidgin after installation visiting this site for instructions (<https://nwschat.weather.gov/emPidgin.php>). After installation, begin at step #5 following the subsequent instructions. All the instructions are valid except for step #19. Please following these instructions in lieu of what is noted on-line.

Account: Select your new username from Section II

Room: dmxxemachat (this is a unique room and not in the on-line instructions)

Server: conference.nwschat.weather.gov

Handle: enter information similar to what you entered in Section II Step #3. This should be something that identifies your position (Polk IA EM, Appanoose Dispatch, etc)

Password: (Leave blank)

Alias: DMX Chatroom

Group: Select Chatrooms or whatever location you prefer in the pulldown menu. You can create new groups if you wish by selecting Buddies...Add Group from the Pidgin main menu.

It is recommended to select "Autojoin when account becomes online".

V. Chatroom Etiquette

Chatroom usage should be restricted to professional, work related topics primarily used to coordinate during severe weather and to relay reports to the National Weather Service. However the room can also be used during non-weather events when adjacent county emergency managers and dispatch offices need to coordinate such as during hazardous material incidents or integrated law enforcement response. NWS products will also automatically appear in the chatroom via the NWSChat Project 'bot'.

There are only limited cases when you should private message the NWS. Please keep most conversations in the room so that the information does not have to be duplicated and is shared among all users.

Please see the Terms of Use, Section 5 for further information.

VI. Support

- Technical

Shane Searcy or Brad Small
NWS Des Moines
shane.searcy@noaa.gov
bradley.small@noaa.gov
(515) 270-4501

- Procedural

Brad Small or Jeff Johnson
NWS Des Moines
bradley.small@noaa.gov
jeff.johnson@noaa.gov
(515) 270-4501